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## The NJMC's Environment Center Joins Nature Program Cooperative

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission's Meadowlands Environment Center has become a part of a growing Nature Program Cooperative composed of nature centers, bird sanctuaries and parks throughout Bergen County.

"Education is the most important tool we have in bringing the word of environmental awareness to the masses," said NJMC Chair Susan Bass Levin, also the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Commissioner. "Now we can share the vast educational resources of our Environment Center with other centers dedicated to bringing the message to the public, and make our visitors aware of these other exciting opportunities available to them."

The Nature Program Cooperative aims to pool knowledge and resources to give people greater opportunities to explore Bergen County's natural side. Activities include hiking, boat trips, paddling, live animal presentations, slideshows and more. Throughout the year, each partner of the co-op will host either an outdoor activity or indoor educational program.

"We are proud to include the Meadowlands Environment Center in this cooperative that focuses on environmental and educational outreach," said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. "By becoming part of this group, we join more than a dozen agencies, including the New Jersey Audubon Society and the Hackensack Riverkeeper, in the shared goal of educating people about preserving nature, our most valuable resource."

Earlier this month, the MEC hosted its first Nature Program Cooperative event with a session called "Winter Watercolors." Participants tried their hands at watercolor painting, learned about paint and paper types, sought inspiration from the breathtaking views outside the center's windows, and created their own masterpieces to take home.

"I've got to admit I was surprised when I saw all of the tremendous opportunities for environmental education that exist right here in the Bergen County area," said Hugh Carola, Hackensack Riverkeeper's Program Director. "But what didn't surprise me was the tremendous amount of talent, experience and dedication that my colleagues have. They are truly an inspiration to me." As part of the co-op, the Riverkeeper will host a boat tour of Bergen County in July.

For more information about the Nature Program Cooperative, visit the NJMC's Web site at:

[http://www.njmeadowlands.gov/EC/get\\_involved/Nature\\_Program\\_Cooperative/Nature\\_Program\\_Cooperative.cfm](http://www.njmeadowlands.gov/EC/get_involved/Nature_Program_Cooperative/Nature_Program_Cooperative.cfm).

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